

The COMMONWEAL

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Wiley, Fellows and the DP's

THE United States has had vast numbers of European displaced persons in her charge for nearly three years now. They are supported at taxpayers' expense in special camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. Unable to return to homelands under totalitarian rule they seek a chance to establish themselves and their families in new lands; they have command of the widest range of professional and vocational skills. The reasons for admitting our due share to this country have long been obvious. Such a policy clearly would hasten European revival and heighten the effectiveness of ERP; it would materially facilitate administration of our occupation zones in Austria and Germany. It would bring to this country highly useful professional, agricultural and mechanical skills. Finally, American acceptance of a proper share of DP's would spur more countries with capacity to absorb to open their doors as England and a few others have been doing. A million unbowed foes of dictatorship would then have the fresh start which they deserve, and under favoring circumstances.

American soldiers in Germany have the most favorable impression of the men and women in our DP camps there—for neatness, skills and an

anti-Communism that is unsurpassed anywhere in this country. Occupation troops interviewed for a recent article in the *Saturday Evening Post* also fear that if America delays much longer the countries now welcoming DP's will have siphoned off the most able and productive. Meanwhile William Hallam Tuck, our representative on the preparatory commission of the International Refugee Organization, reports, at Geneva, growing tension between the Germans and these displaced persons, who were once their victims. And Anne O'Hare McCormick tells in the *New York Times* of the great success of 50,000 DP's in adapting themselves to gainful employment and the English way of life in the past ten months—thanks to a remarkable orientation course and technical instruction.

That this is the thing for America to do has been so patent that virtually every major national civic, religious and welfare organization and an imposing list of the nation's public figures have firmly advocated it. Plans for settling DP's have been set up by twenty states and by a number of private organizations.

The legislation embodying the ideas of these far-seeing groups and individuals was the Stratton Bill, introduced in Congress more than a year ago, which would admit 400,000 DP's over a four year period. In spite of everything, this bill has never even been reported out; it is now deadlier than a dodo.

The Wiley Bill introduced in the Senate some weeks back would admit only 100,000 in two years; half of these would have to be farm workers and half from countries already annexed by a foreign power (provisions that would result in the separation of families). The Fellows Bill, just reported out by the House Judiciary Committee, would admit 200,000 during the next two years. But these and the 15,000 already in this country would be charged against future immigration quotas. Moreover, the 20,000 DP's now in Shanghai would not be eligible. Doctors, farm workers and skilled mechanics would have priority and private agencies would have to post bonds that none would become a public charge.

If an amended version of the Fellows Bill be the best we can get, let it be enacted without more of the crippling delay, which has exposed the American system of government in its most parlous ineffectuality.

The Neighborhood and the Law

THE idea of a neighborhood community which seems logically to have priority, so that the advocates of some other idea ought to bear the burden of proving their kind better, is that of a diversified, well rounded, small society embodying on a scale which the persons within can grasp, the composition—especially the human

composition—of the whole city or region. The fact that this idea and this kind of community have, over the past century, lost out in the actual development of our towns and cities, and also in the imagination and planning of the few people who think about such things, does not disprove the rightness of the all-around small society idea. Indeed, it seems obvious enough that the ideas and other forces which have shaped the cities and regions during more than the past century, have not been the best that men could devise. In fact, they have been terrible.

In this country at least—in the District of Columbia, St. Louis, Detroit, specifically noted, and with no city or state specifically exempted—one of the most definite and radical devices used in developing deliberately warped communities has been the "restrictive covenant," which bars persons from owning or living in property because of race or color and thus helps stamp "the pattern of segregation existing within the United States."

Splendidly now the Supreme Court has ruled that restrictive covenant agreements cannot have judicial enforcement. The agreements themselves are not ruled out suddenly, and voluntary adherence to them is not against the law; but the courts cannot now prevent a party to such an agreement from withdrawing—from becoming more far-seeing and more human. Racial and color ghettos are in happy danger. The Supreme Court decision, of course, does not settle the development of neighborhood communities, but it should stimulate us to look further and with greater eagerness to a better ideal of a rich and comprehensive society of neighbors-in-fact.

Prize Poet

THE COMMONWEAL is highly delighted that for the second year in succession, the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry should be one of its old-time and most valued contributors. We published Wystan Auden's first contribution in October, 1942. Robert Lowell, last year's Pulitzer Poetry winner, has been published in our columns since 1945. Wystan Auden is probably the most mature poet of his age, and his influence on his own generation and his followers is enormous. His lines even furnish current book-titles; and have been used in their sermons by distinguished Jesuit Provincials; he is anthologized almost *ad nauseam*; and yet, neither publicity nor power has interfered with his poetry. His magnificent "For the Time Being" contains some of the loveliest lyrics penned to Our Lady in the English language, and his strange meditations on "The Tempest," are amongst the most profound English mystical writings since Blake. The Pulitzer judges' choice reflects well upon themselves as well as upon W. H. Auden.

Catholic International News

This week, on page 96, THE COMMONWEAL starts a page of *Catholic International News*. The new, weekly department will deal with activities of Catholics engaged abroad in politics and other public affairs. We feel confident this new material will interest and help COMMONWEAL readers by giving definite information about people with identified names, actions of practical decision, ideas with historical consequence. The page can be undertaken because *Catholic International Press* has developed excellent world-wide news reporting, focused upon matters of particular interest to this magazine. We believe this special news coverage, available principally through CIP "for the clarification of spiritual issues in current events," is now presented to our readers consistently, briefly, and in a form they may easily and usefully follow—as it is not by any other publication.

Shepherd's Warning

"IT IS A sad pity" Sir Mark Sykes wrote in 1914 "that in fighting Prussian militarism we shall become it." Freedom has always been the first casualty of war, and the slowest convalescent after, and in this cold, crepuscular light that is dusk of Ragnorak or dawn of Armageddon we should constantly be checking her pulse lest she pass out on us, unaware.

"From now on, the police are in full charge; you are to crack skulls if they ask for it" Captain Eli Dahlin of the Kansas City Police told his men before turning them loose on the strikers in Kansas City last week. It may be that Captain Dahlin was following Saint Thomas in his suggestion that where action had been decided upon, anger might legitimately take hold. But also, maybe not.

Robert McLean, president of the AP and publisher of the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*, told over 1,100 guests at the AP centenary luncheon two weeks ago that the growing tendency of government either to create official agencies of information or in some countries to subsidize national news agencies was a threat to the proper information of the public, because governments have "a nationalistic axe to grind, and the blade is not always the bright blade of truth."

Henry Wallace was denied the use of any school building for his meeting in Columbia, Missouri; when he announced his intention of speaking in the Armory, an unscheduled troop review was instantly arranged; denied a permit to speak on the street, he prepared to talk from the steps of City Hall "until I am arrested." His supporters now dare not wear their buttons at work, for fear of losing their jobs, concealing them under their lapels. And the recent purges in the State Department have made some employees so

nervous that there is a good deal of silly talk going around of telephone wires being tapped. Meantime, Congress smirches a lot of citizens, and bays after the President for the Condon file.

Luckily, the creators of the Constitution knew something about clamoring Commons. They remembered that when Charles I could not defend Strafford against impeachment, but jettisoned him, he himself followed shortly after, and the end of that experiment in control of the executive by the legislature was called Cromwell. The separation of powers prevents Truman from ever being put in Charles's position, even if both Houses demand the Condon file. Indeed, President Washington already refused the House of Representatives which was badgering him in 1796 to give them a copy of his instructions to the Ministers of the United States who negotiated the treaty with Great Britain. "It is essential" he told them on that occasion "to the due administration of Government that the boundaries fixed by the Constitution between the different departments should be preserved."

And woe betide any President who even appeared to give executive representation to the legislature! It would gravely shake the exquisite arrangement of checks and balances that is the condition of our precious yet precarious liberties.

Today, when the Legislature is shying at red shadows, the Supreme Court remains an island of deliberate sanity, casting out the bogies of discrimination as they appear, fattened though they are by current fears.

The big, anti-Communist, CIO unions, such as steel and motors, are other reservoirs of civil liberty. Having cast out their own Commies, they can sympathize with all who suffer from the red scare, whilst remaining cool arsenals of order.

Fear is always a manifestation of insecurity, and it is a curious phenomenon that, after both World Wars, America, the victor, has suffered a conservative reaction. Today the wave of post-war jitters, which once sucked up Wilson as holocaust, has already snuffed out Roosevelt's reputation, and may well swallow not only Truman but also the left-wing Republican candidates, leaving beached upon us in its passing a Vandenberg or a Martin.

The superficial irritations of the present may quite possibly be symptoms of bitter, inner psychological resentment and disappointment. America fought World War I for the freedom and self-determination of the small peoples; when Lloyd George and Clemenceau made mockery of our hopes, and the Secret Treaties showed us up for the suckers we were, we out-tubbed Diogenes; in this war, suspicious of slogans, we fought for the simplest things, chary of all emotion. Peace, and to live and let live was all our longing, and today we are angry and sore because Russia, who suffered more than we did in

the war, will not play ball with us in the peace. Yalta was more than a shock, it was a shame, and, fed-up, we are now letting out at the nearest available object, those who, here at home, sympathize with the Power that has let us down: those who do not share our disillusionment, but sneer at it.

So, until some stability is reached in our relations with Russia, and certainly during the election campaign, we are likely to have increasingly indiscriminating restriction of all non-conformists. Yet, disagreeable though this discomfort is, we can be fairly confident that the basic tradition of liberty will weather it successfully, and, be the end war or peace, will come out the other side. Still, it is important to realize that every policeman who cracks a striker's head, every governmental interference with the press, every effort by Congress to smear the Executive, is an attempt to scare us pink, if not Red.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

A Psalm

When psalms surprise me with their music
And antiphons turn to rum
The Spirit sings: the bottom drops out of my soul

And from the center of my cellar, Love, louder than
thunder
Opens a heaven of naked air.

New eyes awaken.
I send Love's name into the world with wings
And songs grow up around me like a jungle.
Choirs of all creatures sing the tunes
Your Spirit played in Eden.
Zebras and antelopes and birds of paradise
Shine on the face of the abyss
And I am drunk with the great wilderness
Of the sixth day in Genesis.

But sound is never half so fair
As when that music turns to air
And the universe dies of excellence.

Sun, moon and stars
Fall from their heavenly towers.
Joys walk no longer down the blue world's shore.

Though fires loiter, lights still fly on the air of the gulf
All fear another wind, another thunder:
Then one more voice
Snuffs all their flares in one gust.

And I go forth with no more wine and no more stars
And no more buds and no more Eden
And no more animals and no more sea:
While God sings by Himself in acres of night
And walls fall down, that guarded Paradise.

THOMAS MERTON.

CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

BERLIN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND WEST

Berlin (CIP) "Ninety percent of the German people are today more opposed to Communism than ever before," *Dr. Walther Schreiber*, former Prussian Minister of Finance, declared at the Convention of the Berlin Federation of the Christian Democratic Union, at which he was re-elected Regional President by an overwhelming majority. He denounced the "doubled-barreled morality" of the Communist-dominated German People's Congress as well as "the dangerous expansionism of vehement political ideologies which try to subjugate one country after the other by methods always alike." As an example of the "double-barreled morality" of the People's Congress *Dr. Schreiber* mentioned the criticism which the Communist-controlled press has been expressing regarding American food imports to Western Germany, which were described as "a sure sign of enslavement by American monopoly capitalism." The fact, on the other hand, that "in the Soviet Zone, every year billions worth of goods, including even food, are taken away from current production" is apparently "considered by the freedom-loving fighters of the Socialist Unity Party as the surest sign of German liberty," *Dr. Schreiber* declared ironically.

In his speech before the Convention, *Jakob Kaiser* declared: "No People's Congress and no People's Referendum is able to hide the fact that liberty has been more and more restricted in the Soviet Zone. Immediately after the Potsdam Agreement, the Communists began their game of combining the theory of unity with the practice of division. It is very sad that the German people are asked to participate in a referendum concerning their unity while at the same time the mail between Berlin and the rest of Germany is not running and letters and packages are piling up because they cannot be shipped."

Dr. Schreiber agreed with *Herr Kaiser's* statements. He added that the idea of Germany's "intermediate position" between East and West does not imply "the arrogant belief that Germany should try to be the mediator in the disputes among the victors of World War II," but, on the contrary, the conviction that Germany must be "open-minded towards the political concepts of all the occupation powers and behave loyally towards all of them."

RUSSIANS ALLOW CDU CONVENTION

Berlin (CIP) Plans for a Convention of the Christian Democratic Union in the Soviet Zone of Germany, to be held June 11, have been approved by the Soviet Military Administration. By withdrawing the veto by which they prevented such a Convention from being held when *Jakob Kaiser*, President of the CDU, and other leaders clamored for it last January, the Russians have indicated that the numerous changes in the party which SMA pressure has brought about in the meantime will undoubtedly lead to results entirely different from those which would have been likely in January or February. Having ousted *Jakob Kaiser* from the party's Presidency to which he was re-elected by a vote of 249:1 at the last Convention, the

Soviet Military Administration then arrested a number of Christian Democratic leaders, among them the State Secretary in Saxony-Anhalt, *Mueller*, forbade others to run for re-election to the Regional Committees, and coerced the rest into supporting the Communist-dominated German People's Congress. Many Christian Democrats yielded to Russian pressure.

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL IN BERLIN AND POPE

Berlin (CIP) Violent attacks against Pope Pius XII and the Vatican were combined with anti-American statements in the speech which *Colonel Sergei Tulpanov*, Head of the Political Division of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany, delivered at the hundredth anniversary celebration of the Communist Manifesto: "Even the Pope, the caliph of the Western Christians, the great and inventive witch-doctor, gets confused now and then when workers belonging to the Catholic parties try to discover what in reality is hidden behind the demagogical term of 'Christian Socialism' and when, as a result, they turn towards proletarian Socialism."

Later, in the same speech, *Colonel Tulpanov* stated: "Is it not true that the Vatican, one of the most dangerous remnants of the old world, is being cleverly used today by international monopoly capitalism and that it is trying to profit from the idea of Socialism by means of its Center Party? Apparently it is difficult to maintain oneself in power by means of the absolution of sins! That is, however, precisely what the Vatican is doing. Why should it not make an attempt at combining its own infallibility with sinful Socialism, provided that this is the way of diverting the workers from the class struggle?"

CARDINAL OPTIMISTIC DESPITE DIFFICULTIES

Rome (CIP) Tempered optimism was the dominant note of an interview which *Konrad Cardinal von Preysing*, Bishop of Berlin, gave a CIP correspondent, when he arrived here by air from Germany. "The pastors of all the Berlin parishes have assured me that they have never been present at such a beautiful Easter celebration as this year. . . . A great number of families are suffering greatly due to the absence of their fathers or the lack of adequate living quarters, but strong religious belief in many of them helps them to live through these difficult times."

Cardinal von Preysing stated: "It is greatly exaggerated to say that the German youth is 'a lost generation.' A great many young people are perfectly sound. We have great hopes for them. . . ." To a question concerning any particular difficulties which the Church is encountering in the former German capital, the Cardinal replied: "We suffer under a lack of paper for the printing of catechisms, periodicals and Catholic books. This problem is giving us many headaches."

The Cardinal concluded by pointing out that there is a shortage of priests because of the losses suffered during the war and under the Nazi persecutions but that the gaps are being filled gradually. The number of vocations to the priesthood, he declared, is most gratifying and much larger than could have been expected.

Four Letters *

Eric Gill

TO HENRY ATKINSON

DITCHLING COMMON, Sx.

20-6-1917

My dear Atkinson, I must send you a short letter to say that I have read your most valuable description of the utterly damned system of efficient or scientific management in its particular aspect of 'Reward' payment. I think the book¹ most valuable as being a clear & complete exposition of one part of the subject and I am very glad to have it for reference. I was recently the guest of a man called Impey who is a partner in a firm of 'looseleafedger' manufacturers at Birmingham & whose factory is run on the system you advocate. I went all over the factory & had opportunities of discussion with both the masters, 'foremen' (or whatever you wd. call them) & men & it was as a result of that visit, followed as it was by a three days stay at a Dominican Monastery at (or near) Rugeley (Staffs.), that I invented my famous definitions of Slavery & Freedom. I sent you those definitions (*The Game*, Easter Number) & you will see at once how opposed are our principles. You will of course put me down among that absurd class of idealists who seek to destroy all the benefits of modern 'progress'. I can't help it. I fully admit that you are on the rising tide. I was going to say 'the winning side' but of course that is not true, for in the end your side will not win simply because it bases itself upon a false estimate of human nature. We say that normally (& by 'normally' we do not mean generally or on the average at any particular time & certainly not at this present time) a man finds his greatest interest & pleasure & enthusiasm in his work; that that work to bear him that fruit of interest & pleasure must be the work by wh. he earns his living & not merely work done in his spare time (that normally men do not desire leisure, spare-time or holidays—except by way of exception); that such work, to bear such fruit, must be such as the workman is responsible for, not merely for its lack of faults but *for its merits*.

But, enough, you know what I'm at—it is just the precise opposite of what *you* are driving at. *You*, as far as England & indeed the whole of

* This correspondence is taken from "Letters of Eric Gill" soon to be published in America by Devin-Adair.

¹A Rational Wages System.

our modern civilization is concerned, will win, & I face the fact fully. There is just this weakness in your position: you do not in your heart believe that the factory system of production (I say nothing about machinery—that is neither here nor there & doesn't enter into the discussion) is the best system. Of course you don't. In spite of your (obviously absurd & illogical) contentions that the system you advocate tends to make the work itself interesting to do and (more absurd still) that the knowledge that the greatest quantity is being produced tends to make work less mechanical, you don't really believe that the sort of things of which man is normally desirous can be made under your system. Of course they can't. Why pretend they can? Let us have no more of this hypocrisy about art & beauty. They don't come in. Why shd. they come in? Do you suppose that art can live under such circumstances as you dream of? You really are jolly funny about art & all that sort of extra—something you get in your leisure time—concerts & exhibitions & theatres & culture. No, you don't face the facts properly. You want to eat your cake and have it (or, if you don't do so personally—for perhaps you may justly contend that you don't think art of much importance—many of your colleagues do so). You think you can have a civilization founded upon a quantitative basis with a sort of 'quality' department running along side. Can't be done. Better face the facts & chuck one or the other as I do. I say that you can't have the country run on the factory system & at the same time produce works of art of any kind worth having—i.e. works wh. are not merely a sort of lick-spittle works done to please either the cultured rich or the clamouring factory hands trained in cinemas & municipal art schools. But you mustn't think I'm cross about it. If I write thus it's only because I haven't time to write otherwise. We won't talk any more about art. You don't understand as much about that side of things as I do about the factory system. So you're not capable of judging. You must take it from me therefore as an expert (as I take things from you as an expert) that the sort of civilization wh. you are helping to build is one in which there must be no sort of talk about the word or the thing. Let it be a sensible civilization & not a silly one. Let it be sanitary & comfortable & efficient. (We'll put aside the question 'what's it all bloomin well for'.) It will

have a certain grandeur of its own. The Forth Bridge, tho. it may be by now somewhat out of date as an engineering feat, is a splendid thing, so is a type-writer (if only they wd. leave out the 'artistic' slobber on the cover) & so is an aeroplane & so is a loose leaf ledger (if only they wd. leave out the imitation hand-tooling on the leather back—but they daren't, because, so Impey told me, their customers ask for it & they must please their customers or else they'd lose the order & that wd. never do. Damned silly, but there you are) & so, I dare say, is a Ford car (if you can't afford anything better or more durable). In fact the whole show might be a jolly fine show if only we could really make up our minds to be sensible & leave out incompatibles. Now there's my trouble. I don't believe the human race is capable of such a sacrifice. I believe it will still demand wall papers & muck of that sort & patterns on biscuit boxes & frills on chemises & rings on its fingers. So we shall fall between two stools—and it will be jolly well our own fault.

One more point: Suppose all the 'necessary' work of the world to be done in a few hours per day & the remainder of the day given to self culture. Do you suppose every one will amuse *himself*? Will there be no need of organized amusement, i.e. paid amusers — professional spare-time contractors? Why shd. some people have the privilege of being paid to be entertaining while others have to put up with the 'enlightened self-interest' of their masters? If you were a factory hand you wd. look with considerable envy upon the lazy swine who played at work to please you.

Oh yes, one more point. You say we can't afford hand-made goods or small workshops & their products—I forget your words but you know what I mean (Morris books & all that tosh). There again you don't face the facts. The fact is that we can afford to have the best, provided we are prepared to have less of it. We can afford a hand-made saucepan if we are prepared to put up with it for several years. If, on the other hand, we must have a new saucepan every month or so, well then of course we must put up with enameled iron. You ought to give up running that stunt about 'can't afford'. It's all balderdash. You must know that the real trouble is that we can't make up our minds to have few things instead of many. Of course we are not to blame. The things are in the shops & we buy them. It's the workman that's to blame for selling himself for money. Enough said.

Again thank you very much for your Christmas letter. I am very glad you found my Westminster carvings more or less to your liking.

I'm still going ahead with them.

We are all very well & cheerful. I am not yet

'called up'.

With love to you both from me & my wife
I am yrs. sincerely
ERIC GILL

TO 'THE CATHOLIC HERALD',
3RD JULY, 1936

CATHOLIC ACTION AND INDUSTRIALISM
An Analysis of the Right to Private Property

Sir: May I support the protest of Fr. Ceolfred Heron in your issue of June 26? The pathetic attempts of Catholics to find reasons for their adhesion to industrialism are based upon a false idea of property and of the natural human right to it, and this false idea of property is the consequence of a forgetfulness (natural enough in our degraded world) of the two-fold nature of human personality. Man is matter and spirit and the mind of man is both intellectual and moral. The right to property follows from man's material necessities and his intellectual nature. The right to property is not primarily a moral right, a right due to man on account of his freewill but is, so to say, an intellectual right, a right due on account of his intelligence. The right of ownership does not derive from men's need to *use* things but from his need to *make* things.

As a moral being, purely as such, man has no right of private ownership. On the contrary, as Pope Leo XIII said:

'Man must not hold external things for private but for common, so that he may freely give to others in their necessities.' (*Rerum Nov.* § 19)

and St. Thomas Aquinas:

'With regard to external things, a man ought to possess them not as his own but as common, and always be ready to put them at the disposal of others who are in need' (*Summ. Theol.* II-II, 62, 2).

It is to man as workman, as an intelligent being who must manipulate things in order to make them serviceable, that private ownership is both necessary and a natural right. Only when there is full control of the means of production can there be proper and suitable manipulation. Unless I own the fields I cannot exercise my skill and intelligence upon the land. (It is for this reason that ownership is better than tenancy and that, in the case of a tenant, the terms of tenancy must be as nearly as possible equivalent to ownership). Unless I own the stone and my tools I cannot properly exercise my skill and intelligence as a stone carver. Unless I own the mine, individually or jointly with my fellow miners, I cannot or we cannot properly control the job of mining. It is this necessity of manipulation which gives the right of private property in the means of production. As Maritain says:

'The exercise of art work (whether it be

that of a craftsman or a manual labourer) is the formal reason of individual appropriation . . . In the case of the bee there is no *reason* in operation; neither is there any individual ownership . . . the notion of person must be included in any complete theory of property.' (*Freedom in the Modern World*, App. 1, 3 and 4).

These things being clear, we may now see clearly their application to our special problem of capitalist industrialism; and it is now obvious that, as things are, the ground upon which we claim and that upon which alone we can claim private property has been destroyed. The factory hand, like the bee, can make no claim to private ownership and the big machine industries of manufacture and transport are no longer in any true sense private enterprises; they are (as their directors boast) public services. Hence the moral force of communism. The workers see the facts which we so culpably endeavour to hide; what are public services should be publicly owned for the profit of all. The only reason for private ownership, the intellectual operation of the workman (by which he imprints on matter the mark of a rational being) having been destroyed by our development of machine industry, there remains no christian, no rational objection to communal ownership.

The conclusion emerges and is obvious. We cannot demand private property in the means of production unless we are prepared to abandon industrialism. If we are *not* so prepared then we must prepare ourselves for communal ownership. Capitalist organisation implicitly and Communist organisation implicitly lead to public ownership for private use. This is the exact opposite of christian organisation. In a christian society there is private ownership for the sake of common use. In our society we have reduced all manufacture and transport (except the lap-dog fine arts) to the level of impersonal and therefore subhuman enterprises (as Fr. D'Arcy says: 'We have reduced the workman to a sub-human condition of intellectual irresponsibility') and in our abominable selfishness we endeavour to maintain private ownership in the use of things. And then we say that private property is a principle of christianity, and by means of Catholic Action seek to perpetuate the crucifixion of the workers, saying to them: Have patience, 'be you warmed and fed.' They will not much longer endure it.

ERIC GILL

TO 'G. K.'s WEEKLY' 7 NOV. 1925

The Control of Machinery

Sir: With reference to the letter of Mr. W. S. Roe in your issue of October 17. The matter of machinery is one to which no doubt you will be

giving your official attention before very long, and I do not wish to anticipate. There is one point, however, which might as well be stated without delay, for it is one which has been missed by all your correspondents hitherto.

Mr. Roe says: 'Learn how to control machinery and we shall get a much better result from that we already have, etc. . . .' Now before we can say *How* to control anything we must decide *who* is to control it—this is the fundamental point. Imagine an unruly child. People ask themselves how to control it. Is it not obvious that the problem wears an entirely different aspect directly we put it to ourselves, as we should do in the *first* place, in terms of *who*. Thus, is the father to control, or the schoolmaster, or the superintendent of the reformatory? The mere mechanism of control is entirely different according as it proceeds from one or the other.

I do not propose now to write at length upon the question as to *who* should control machinery. I merely wish to point out that this question is antecedent to the question of *how* we should control machinery, and I think it is obvious that when the question of *who* is decided, the question of *how* will be much less difficult.

Mr. Roe's letter ends with the sentence: 'To persuade a man to use a spade when he can employ a plough—well, I think it is a hopeless job.' Mr. Roe implies that the cultivator he envisages is able to choose his tool. Before we can make an implication as delightfully simple as that, let us ask ourselves, for example, whether the linotype machines used in Fleet Street are chosen by the compositors, or whether it is not possible that those machines are chosen by persons whose trade is money-making rather than 'comping.' Yours, etc.,

ERIC GILL

P.S.—Mr. Roe quotes Carlyle's saying that man is 'a tool-using animal.' It is at least doubtful whether Lord Beaverbrook can justly be said to use the linotype machines he controls.

TO MISS HALL¹

PIGOTTS, HIGH WYCOMBE, ENGLAND 27-8-1934

Dear Miss Hall: I have received your letter of a few weeks ago. I am most interested by all you say in it. I wish I had the time to answer fully. I'm terribly busy at present & long letters are an impossibility. You must forgive a short reply therefore. Moreover the problems you raise are not such as can easily be dealt with. The whole trouble of our civilization is involved—its godlessness & its false gods & its consequent economic muddle & injustice, & its consequent ugliness & disorder. The only real advice I can give (at this great distance of miles away) is that you,

¹ Librarian of the Catholic Library, Johannesburg.

by 'prayer & fasting', perfect your mind—by reading, writing, talking, loving, thinking, probing, criticising—referring all things to their sources . . . Thus, in spite of all the misery which you must necessarily suffer, you will have an interior peace of mind. (There's only one source of all *good* things. If your criticism & probing lead you to any other source—well, you will know where you are . . .) in this welter of to-day the most & the best we can hope for is peace of *mind*.

Your problem:—

How is it that if industrialism is bad we can get benefits from its products? e.g. Medici prints, gramophone records, etc.

Answer: The essential badness of industrialism is its effect on *men & women*, e.g. 'it reduces them (in Fr. Martin D'Arcy's phrase) to a sub-human condition of intellectual irresponsibility.' It makes marriage & the home & children more & more difficult. It makes profit-making more urgent than enthusiasm for quality of production, etc. But it doesn't follow that *all* industrial products are bad *things*. Simply because the method of production entails subhuman development of men & women the product is not therefore a bad product. A machine-made nail is not necessarily a bad *nail*. So a photograph of a picture isn't necessarily a bad *photograph*, etc. But it is a bad civilisation which makes men & women more & more dependent upon such things—so that their creative powers are more & more atrophied & they become dependent upon specialists—and the 'artist' becomes more & more a peculiar person, etc. . . . [. . .]

N.B. It's not machines in themselves that are bad—it's their use & control almost exclusively by 'business' people rather than by those who design or use them. Our trouble is not primarily the *existence* of machines but their ownership and control by persons whose one concern is profits. Don't be misled by their own account of themselves . . . etc. . . . Yours sincerely. ERIC GILL

Please forgive my hasty scribble.

P.S. It occurs to me that I ought to add that while it's true that machine-products aren't necessarily bad things, *they aren't necessarily good either*. This is obvious—still, it must be said. A profit-making system (i.e. a system primarily concerned with profits, of which profits are the test of success) inevitably produces many bad things because its control is in the sole hands of business men & for them a good thing is simply what will sell. And the standard of criticism in the buyer becomes lower & lower as he becomes more & more intellectually irresponsible. (Hence all the efforts of things like the B.B.C. to elevate the public taste! and, e.g., the efforts of people like Carnegie to give back in the form of libraries what they have taken away by the industrial degeneration of the workers.) ERIC GILL

The Stage & Screen

Inside U. S. A.

AT ONE MOMENT John Gunther does actually come "inside" this hit revue. This is when a hoosier monologist, Herb Shriner, wanders on in the midst of the hoopla, carrying a very new copy of what the authors call the "famous book," and making a few pertinent political comments. Mr. Shriner is young, bright, and nice; and as a representative of the international best-seller, I'm sure he's earning Mr. Gunther's public (*outside*) gratitude. Beyond this, there is not too much analysis or intellection at work these days at the Century. The irrevocable firm of Dietz & Schwartz are not dealing in pretensions: they are dealing a lickity-split, conventional revue for fun, money, and, obviously, their own and their players' delight. When one realizes that their stars are Beatrice Lillie and Jack Haley, one has a good lead on the amount of established talent at hand; and when I say that these stars are backed by an honest amount of discovered young business, you are to imagine that this is a special affair.

Certainly not since "Call Me Mister" has such a well-proportioned revue been on hand. The formula works out very well and although it *is* a formula (a Revue is simply a series of skits and musical numbers brought together under one all-embracing title), the authors have managed a good deal of invention in individual scenes. They've got, for instance, the best narrative ballet—a satirical Chicago thing, called "Tiger Lily," conceived by Helen Tamaris and beautifully danced by Valerie Bettis—I have seen in ages. This dance is not only concretely witty, it's got a real inner logic of its own without any guess-work required from the house. Other than this, on the musical end, there is the right amount of adjusted corn, provocative lyrics by Howard Dietz, an amusing Mardi Gras hodge-podge, and a charming first act finale detailing the doings at a Wisconsin County Fair. One particular song concerned with Rhode Island and featuring Jack Haley and Estelle Loring is tops. Mr. Haley is also ingratiating in a wonderful Horwitt-Auerbach sketch devoted to the tortures of the various sleep gadgets on the market, and I particularly loved him at the last when as an Indian to Miss Lillie's Sqaw, the pair of them refuse the entire country at any price. This is called, of course, "We Won't Take It Back."

With all this support, and a good number of talented new faces, one might imagine that the incomparable Bea might be having to work—a supposition which is, as you can guess, ridiculous. With each of her entrances, the show is automatically hers. Her zenith, I think, is the Mermaid skit where, done up in shimmering tail, she embarks on a saga (as she says, "There's a saga born every minute") of Massachusetts, the ocean, and "A Sea-cow Named Desire." Very fine. Also fine are the Pittsburgh choral biz; the aforementioned Indian biz; and a sketch weirdly introducing Chopin, Liszt, and

Tschaikowsky into Ohio where I thought her German even better than her French. She does run amuck in a Moss Hart Broadway number which has the most tasteless curtain tag possible, but since all critical opinion has been unanimous on this point, I imagine the affair will be dropped, or changed.

All in all, this is scrupulous Broadway; it's your money's worth; it's gay, witty, airy, and aware; and it features in Miss Lillie perhaps the most beloved clown on any Anglo-Saxon shore. (*at the New Century.*) ..

The Play's The Thing

A CONSENSUS of the opinions of my critical peers seems to rate this Molnar farce wholly on the basis of nostalgia. Evidently twenty-odd years ago the piece *hit*; twenty-odd years ago, the estimable Holbrook Blinn, in the lead, elevated the boys into wholesale appreciation; twenty-odd years ago, everyone was happy—and they still are. Well, if one hasn't got a twenty-year memory, I honestly don't think one should be reviewing the play at all. It's not frankly "period," it's simply silly; and although a number of excellent actors perform it, I found it heavy sledding.

Ballet Theatre

NORA KAYE'S first performance of Agnes de Mille's "Fall River Legend"—a ballet which was, I believe, especially designed for this dancer—was the occasion for my third attendance at this excellent Dance Theatre. Miss de Mille's subject is the Lizzie Borden murder case, although in a brief précis fronting the program, she disclaims any attempt to report fact history, but rather to "explore the passions that lead to a violent resolution of the oppressions and turmoils that can beset an ordinary life." I wish I could understand this statement, because then, it seems to me, I might better understand Miss de Mille's present choreographic trend: a mixture of naturalism and convention which can only be called, I think, "red herring." And not "good red herring," at that. The same confusion of forms was largely responsible for that earlier giant fiasco, "Allegro," in which Miss de Mille had again a major part. I think the chief problem with this kind of mix-drix is that there is no guide-post provided for the spectator: there is none of that inner logic which certifies the Tamaris ballet mentioned above. It is perfectly possible, for instance, to concede to Miss de Mille's stated abandonment of history; it is even possible to concede to her definition of Lizzie Borden's as an "ordinary life"; it is possible, intellectually, to understand the heroine of the work danced simultaneously as a child and a woman; but it is not possible to grasp why at one moment a skeleton set is engineered by tricky machinery, and at the next, by a number of the dancers themselves; why, at certain moments, people enter through the door, and at seemingly crucial moments, through the walls. Miss de Mille's abstract primary contentions appear to demand that we keep our wits about us; but her staging appears to ask us to relinquish them. In the end, of course, we find we have lost our wits entirely and, moreover, have been too busy *figuring* to achieve any esthetic pleasure from the dancing

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at all. In the sense that this is transitional work and that its designer is openly serious, I will say that the whole present value of the piece (as of "Allegro") is its confusion. This presents, of course, a critical problem, and I only wish a number of the true dance critics, as well as the theatre ones, would begin to admit its importance. I want only to add that the company—with especial emphasis on Miss Kaye, John Kriza, and Ruth Ann Koesun—handled the business with their customary admirable skill. (*at the Metropolitan Opera.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

Murder He Says!

FILMS of mystery, violence and crime frequently provide escape for world-weary movie-goers who feel they have to avoid the real issues once in a while. As such they serve a legitimate purpose, but when these films go in for violence just for violence's sake, they serve no purpose, and, besides being a bore, are likely to do harm. Reviewed briefly here are some new thrillers that may help you escape—or may bore. Choose your own poison.

I'm not sure whom Orson Welles was kidding in his production of "*The Lady from Shanghai*." Surely someone was being razed, for this picture has as unpleasant a group of characters as was ever gathered into one film. Orson himself plays an Irish sailor of heroic proportions, but everyone else is pretty decadent. The clue to the entanglement into which Orson gets thrown with Rita Hayworth, Everett Sloan, Glenn Anders and several other capable actors—all depicting scum—is in the tale Orson tells about sharks who sometimes eat each other. Practically all these people, who spend most of the footage chasing each other and being as nasty as possible, finally kill one another off. Mr. Welles has decorated this mass slaughter with some typical Wellesian trick photography which is interesting but doesn't compensate for the story's warped standards.

"*The Big Clock*" manages to be chock full of thrills and bright humor, and at the same time make some sense. Its exciting plot centers around Ray Milland, a mystery magazine editor who finds himself in the embarrassing position of having to track himself down for a murder committed by his boss. Charles Laughton portrays this boss with his usual ham, but since he's a publisher perhaps his Napoleonic attitudes are correct. John Farrow has directed the script based on Kenneth Fearing's novel with emphasis on fun and fury. And the supporting cast is excellent, particularly Elsa Lanchester, who lends a wonderful wacky note to the proceedings.

In "*The Hunted*" Preston Foster chases Belita, an ex-con, for an awfully long time. He's torn between his duty as a cop and his love for the girl who is out on parole. While he's making up his mind, the action gets rather slow. Belita fills in with some very good, but not particularly cinematic, ice-skating.

The English have sent over a couple of items that don't move as fast as the usual Hollywood thrillers, but are likely to make more sense. As "*The October Man*," John Mills has every reason to believe he's a mental case who has killed a woman during one of his spells. We

soon find out who the real murderer is, but this does not spoil the suspense. In fact it increases it. Producer-writer Eric Amber and Director Roy Baker seem to take their time about everything, especially as they develop character, and curiously enough this adds to the thrills. Mills and the cast succeed in making your hands sweat without pulling a murder every reel.

"*Take My Life*" is also typical English stuff—with a slow build-up that keeps you more and more on edge even after the murder because again you know the hero didn't do it but the circumstances look very bad for him. Hugh Williams plays this rôle as if he were setting a new pace in understatement. And Greta Gynt is excellent as his wife who tracks down the real killer, a frustrated school-master played convincingly by Marius Goring. This is the kind of a film that makes you watch your own moves for fear even the most innocent of them may later be used against you. Perhaps the story has too much coincidence, but Ronald Neame has directed it so well that the film leaves you limp for all its lack of gun play.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Art, the Moon Prince

J. F. POWERS

"ART AND FAITH"* is the work of two men whose names have grown great since the day it was first published as two pamphlets in Paris more than twenty years ago. It was a time in the history of French poetry, Maritain writes, of which the young men of today can have no idea, a time when poetry was entering deeper than ever into its own mystery, dazzled by its own revelations. Again the good angels would confront the bad angels in the supreme battle of the spirit. Maritain, who held a fragile hope, was to be disappointed but not surprised by the outcome, and today: "Even and especially in the harsh world of today, I have not given up the hope I was then expressing on the basis of frail signs. I know the poets in whom I have my confidence."

According to Wallace Fowlie (*Accent*, Winter 1948), "Each of the great masterpieces in French literature seems extraordinarily aware of the public to which it is addressing itself, of the presence of a public, of a public mind which must be subjugated and enchanted according to well-established rules of subjugation and enchantment." In the letter to Maritain (but written to inform his friends of his conversion) Cocteau is in that French tradition. He has the public tone. He *announces*. His language is wild and woolly by choice; he is all for the therapy of shock and scandal; he has discovered the meaning of the word "hard" and he likes it. Listen to him:

"I should like to make a school of undesirables such as myself. I would teach there the attitudes that close all the doors to you. . . . I shall teach that there are hardnesses and hardnesses. The Blessed Virgin is hard. '*Le Bal du comte d'Orgel*' is hard. Jazz music it not. A puppet is not a diamond."

* Letters Between Jacques Maritain and Jean Cocteau. Translated by John Coleman. Philosophical Library. \$2.75.

"Scandal and solitude, a kind of sensational flop, that is something hard. It is the only thing that suits me. Jesus sets the example for us. Can you imagine Him becoming a rich patriarch? He always shocks . . ."

"I shall teach that the need of change in art is nothing other than the need of finding a fresh place on the pillow. . . . God is the only freshness that does not grow warm."

"I imagine an era where the mind, abandoning its awkward vehicles, would give up trying to convince by means of works of art. Beauty would gradually become goodness, masterpieces acts from the heart, genius would become sanctity . . ."

Much of this, of course, won't hold up if looked at closely—which is the way it must have been looked at by those who laughed at a Cocteau converted and more still at Maritain for taking him seriously. But Cocteau knows that too and has an answer: "I shall endure without shame the smile of theologians, if it will only stimulate a few young Catholics." So we see that Cocteau, among other things, was possessed of a boundless optimism. To paraphrase him, let the young prepare what awful firecrackers they would, and he will touch them off—yes, and hold them in his hand if it will help any. Hence the theater "scandals," the bagpipes, the opium, jazz, the stunts, the diver's suits.

★

"I am considered witty," Cocteau says at the outset, and then: "Nothing irritates me as much as a piece of wit. If I let one escape I am ashamed of it as of a wind. For me the perfect example of wit is the devil dictating to Pascal the invention of the roulette. . . . I know only one man in whom wit is Spirit—Father Mugnier. The little body that modestly clothes this great soul possesses the divine power of being everywhere at once. Every day he helps the poor and rich at every corner of the town. One of the parlor games consists in placing him in danger, in leading him onto an off-color subject. You should hear how Heaven whispers to him an answer that beats and checkmates the worldly player."

Cocteau's conversion, rather reconversion or return, was another in which the Father Browns, always two or three of them, it seems, played a very real but still unassignable rôle. They appear and disappear. And you get the feeling that Cocteau, though rather thrilled by it all, thinks of himself as a wild, rare creature and sees his new friends now as good companions ("Barrès thanks Bourget for having given him a public. You gave me something better: companions") and now as animal-keepers of the great zoo into which he himself is about to enter as the feature exhibit—the common sensation of famous converts?

Evidently, however, Cocteau did not have that hunted, over-proselytized feeling: "The Church enticing people—that's a good one! I like that Villefranche sexton who chases me out of the church at six because it is closing time. He rattles his keys, he calls to me from one end of the nave to the other, he bawls me out because I do not go fast enough. Let us not forget that Max Jacob searched for six years for a priest who would hear him.

"TOPS IN TOON — SCOTCH AND SO-DA-LIGHTFUL"—Walter Winchell

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It is admirable to see the Church so sure of herself, so deeply and dialectically constructed, and so little anxious to attract souls or to hold them." In the United States, of course, things are different; very.

Father Charles, Cocteau relates, "struck me with the same shock as Stravinsky and Picasso. Thus he furnishes me with a proof of God's existence, for Picasso and Stravinsky know how to cover the paper with divine signs, but the Host is the only masterpiece Charles offers me." So, probably, it wasn't anything that Father Mugnier or Father Charles said; no words. Cocteau, himself an artificer, would not be vulnerable there. You feel that it was a plain case of sanctity and nothing of serpents and doves.

Perhaps Cocteau was not shrewd. All he had was his "sincerity"—and his wit, naturally, which he didn't care for. Sometimes it seems very shrewd. Of his "opponents," the surrealist poets: "How can I avoid them? . . . a negative resemblance exists between them who, too wide awake, try to break into the world of dreams, and I who sleep standing, and who try to break into the world of reality."

A pleasing remark on his *Parade* overheard by him and Picasso on coming out of the theater: "If I'd known it was so silly I would have brought the children."

Of Maritain and himself: "It was under the sign of childhood that we got to know each other. I must repeat this to myself to feel worthy of your welcome, you about whom one wonders whether your body is not a formula of politeness, a garment thrown quickly over the soul to receive your friends."

★

His art was the most important thing to Cocteau, and he was simple enough to think, for that reason, that God would feel the same way about it. Art would be very dear to God, the language of God, say. Cocteau would have the artist, with the saint, unlike the rest of men, an intimate to God. For if the artist, in a sense, spoke the word of God, would he not have to know it from God? "Art for God" was Cocteau's big idea of the time. Not art for art's sake, which was just silly, or art for the people. Art was too good for itself and too good for the people. Art was only fit for God.

Cocteau tried to equate art with sanctity, to see the saint and poet alike in their closeness to God. "God will not stand for any kind of lukewarmness. He demands silence or boldness. All I know that suit Him are extreme art and the Orders. Levitation is His proof of love. He is not lavish with it. But occasionally He raises up a monk or a poet."

You don't feel that Cocteau is the trustiest of guides in these matters. You feel that he is the poet at bay, tired of mere readers, going right to the top, going over their heads to God for a seat on the right side, down front, and trying desperately to shock the incompatibles into agreement along the way. Naturally, Maritain, true to Saint Thomas, was not having much of this. More than art is needed. Grace. Even a poet needs grace. It is beautiful to see Maritain coping with Cocteau, reason-

ably, with a charity which is more than theological, more than prescribed, is warmer for comradeship, and more, for it is part of Maritain's greatness that he does not go in for safe conversions and that he has the deepest respect for the artist.

"You are a deep sea fish," Cocteau tells Maritain. "Luminous and blind. Your element is prayer. Once outside of prayer you run into everything. Awkwardness, that is our ground of understanding. The Thomistic apparatus deceives the world on your awkwardness; a mass of misapprehensions makes mine pass for cleverness."

Maritain agrees with him about the awkwardness; somewhere else he tells of the time Erik Satie from a hospital bed asked him to find a jar of jam among his things and said: "There's no use being a Catholic writer and not to be able to find a jar of jam. Just by watching you one can easily see you will never find it."

Maritain tries to deal with a few of Cocteau's misapprehensions. In the 16th century art sinned not by giving too much to art, but by not giving enough to grace. In the 19th century art and theology were separated. Instead of theology artists presented morals. Thence the boring business of trying to edify rather than to please intellectually. Evil: only God cures evil. Art: art is a means to a full life, not to sanctity. The artist?

"If there exists for the artist a whole organism of spiritual virtues, they are virtues in a certain sense only, yet they are real; they imitate, without achieving them, true spirituality, and the virtues of the saint. This is a tragic condition indeed. The artist knows the hardness of the life of the spirit, but he does not taste its hidden peace, which nothing created can give. His will and all his strength of desire he must discipline without mercy, but for an end that is not his end."

But: "Understand me well. As I do with metaphysics I abase poetry only before God. Poetry is not abased by being abased before God. I point out its greatness; no one comes so near the invisible world as the sage and the poet, unless it be the saint—who is but one spirit with God, and so infinitely closer to Him than anyone. I also point out the blessing men receive from poetry. Though in themselves of no help to the attainment of eternal life, art and poetry are more necessary than bread to the human race. They fit it for the life of the spirit."

Maritain says Cocteau's poetry doubtless is based on a conception of the world, but is "too immersed in the concrete" to make a system; his own philosophy, he says, doubtless has a doctrine of art, but is "too abstract to leave the heaven of principles, where so many mansions are, and which rains on the just and on the unjust. Moreover, wisdom and art are two independent absolutes. All sciences are subordinated to wisdom by very reason of their objects. This is not the case with art: it comes into the midst of our hierarchies like a moon prince whom etiquette has not foreseen, and who embarrasses all the masters of ceremonies."

That much, at least, must have pleased Cocteau. But here comes the rest, the hard part:

"From all the masterpieces in the world one could not

draw forth a single movement of charity. We would give, Jean, all the poems and all the systems for *le petit repos d'amour*—invisible even to the natural glance of angels—of a heart united to God."

"Art—an illusionist—transfigures evil, it does not cure it. The prodigious sensuality of your enemy Wagner is so sublimated by the operation of his music that Tristan calls forth no more than an image of the pure essence of love. The fact remains that if Wagner and Matilda Wesendonck had not sinned together, we would not have had *Tristan* . . ."

And should art come to mix with life, "it induces man to seek his perfection, like that of a masterpiece, in the sheer flowering of his nature. This is pure self-deception, to tell the truth. For man has lost the power of attaining his natural perfection; it is a supernatural perfection that is offered him. . . . He is inevitably a scarred creature: either he bears the wounds of the old Adam, or those of the Crucified One.

"To sum up, art is un-human, as sainthood is super-human. From thence come all the analogies I have spoken of, and this insistent demand for heroism; but also this voracity of an idol, and this lie, and the temptation, which seems to trail it through the ages, to ask from perversity an impossible equivalent of the supernatural.

"This, however, is the pretty monster you want to appoint as deputy to the Lord. . . ."

★

Presumably here died, stillborn, "Art for God," the rage it might have had in Paris. For Cocteau, notwithstanding his old predilection for "hardness"—the only thing that suited him—these words must have sounded hard indeed. The diagnosis they make, in the light of Cocteau's subsequent history, is as good as an autopsy. Maritain says, "It is not easy to be a poet, it is not easy to be a Christian, it is doubly difficult to be both at once." That is the project that Cocteau, recovering from an opium bout, seemed to be laying out for himself in 1925. "With the Eucharist," Maritain says, "you will become capable of the impossible, you can touch poetry without dying from it."

On the face of it, something slipped, something went wrong with the convert poet with his eyes on the saints; on the face of it. The artist in him, however, is still going strong. In 1947, thirty years after his debut with *Parade*, he was filling two big theaters in Paris every night.

There is a necessary contradiction existing between the artist and the saint, a question of ends even more than means, and those two never shall meet; though when there is a little of both, in a man, or a lot of one, you might sometimes think so. At times Cocteau makes you feel that art is wiser than wisdom, but he can't prove it—but proof is for professors. You have to take it on faith and be careful. Wisdom resides at the far end of the avenue that leads straight to God; Art lives across the tracks on another street altogether; but here is an untraveled short-cut if you want to take it and—what Cocteau found hard—if you can.

THE IRISH AGAIN

Most of the notable Catholic writing in English from Newman and Hopkins to Dawson and Graham Greene is by converts: and we dredge our minds for reasons why we have not produced for ourselves more writers of the highest quality. Nor does the immediate future offer any certainty that we shall. Except in Ireland. Yet how many of those who are puzzled by the drought of "born Catholic" writers know that in Ireland the drought has broken. Ask most people about modern Irish writers and they will name quickly Shaw, Yeats, Synge, O'Casey (none of them Catholics) and Joyce (hardly so).

But these men are an old story. The new Ireland has a body of "born Catholic" writers not to be matched anywhere: Sean O'Faolain, Robert Farren, Francis MacManus, Roger McHugh, Benedict Kiely. It is one of the major disappointments of our publishing career that we could persuade so few in this country to read **Francis MacManus'** trio of novels, **Robert Farren's** poems, **Roger McHugh's GRATTAN**. (\$2.00). If only they had been born outside the Church!

But the horizon widens a little. Readers have discovered **Farren's COURSE OF IRISH VERSE** (\$2.50) and **MacManus' BOCCACCIO** (\$3.50). We hope that in this new mood they will seize upon **Benedict Kiely's** first book **POOR SCHOLAR** (\$3.00). It is a biographical portrait of William Carleton, who was the greatest novelist Ireland had in the nineteenth century, or perhaps ever. His importance for literature is as nothing to his importance for history. From him and only from him can we know what the reality of life was for Irishmen before the Famine; better than anyone he saw and makes us see the famine itself. Benedict Kiely has written a remarkable study of Carleton; and, as a sort of by-product, a still more remarkable study of nineteenth century Ireland. Or perhaps it is something more deliberate than a by-product: for he sees Carleton as himself a symbol of the Ireland he portrayed: "In his own chaotic and entangled soul he has mirrored all our complications . . . Around him in the ruin, and *within him in his own soul*, were the makings of modern Ireland."

If you say you've no desire to meet Carleton, you simply cannot know what you are saying. Read the book and meet him. You will meet Kiely too. If he is not prodigiously gifted, write me off as a miserably bad judge.

SHEED & WARD
NEW YORK 3

Fiction Is Art—Plus

DAVID BURNHAM

SETTING out to review the new collection of Henry James's critical writings,* one is intimidated by his low opinion of one's task: "a practice that has nothing to do with criticism" and whose patent function is to pad out periodical literature. One's editors must be even further intimidated by James's haunting description of periodical literature: "a huge, open mouth which has to be fed—a vessel of immense capacity which has to be filled. It is like a regular train which starts at an advertised hour, but which is free to start only if every seat be occupied. The seats are many, the train is ponderously long, and hence the manufacture of dummies for the seasons when there are not passengers enough. A stuffed mannikin is thrust into the empty seat, where it makes a creditable figure till the end of the journey. It looks sufficiently like a passenger, and you know it is not one only when you perceive that it neither says anything nor gets out. The guard attends to it when the train is shunted, blows the cinders from its wooden face and gives a different crook to its elbow, so that it may serve for another run."

These words—a good specimen of the lively metaphor with which Henry James spices his comments—were published in 1893. How immeasurably truer today. One proceeds to wonder what would have been Henry James's

reaction to the current practice of our literary quarterlies. These, less plagued by the urgency to fill their seats, are privileged to insist, as Henry James does, upon the distinction between "reviewing" and "criticism." Criticism, however, of what? So often, criticism of critics; or yet of critics' criticism of critics; meanwhile creative literature is left begging by the wayside. As a corollary, consider the frequency with which novelists have figured during this century as protagonists of the more serious class of novels. The most spectacular example is Gide: not only is a novelist (Gide himself, ill-disguised) the focal character of Gide's chief novel, "The Counterfeiters"; this novelist's notes commenting on the novel are equally focal; and further, after publication of the novel, Gide published a volume of comment upon the comments of the commentator.

Henry James himself provides a further corollary. In revising his novels for definitive publication, he appended prefaces describing the conception and composition of his novels—which prefaces were later (1943) published as a separate volume. He did not, as Gide has done, publish during his lifetime his notebooks, preponderantly concerned with his own characters and literary problems; but his admirers have seen fit to do so recently and they have shown themselves on the whole more interested in discussing James than in re-publication of his works; where his works *have* been re-published, this often appears primarily an excuse for a new, extended prefatory appraisal. The blame for this, as I have indicated, cannot be laid

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entirely to the editors and publishers; James himself gave the indication. Another conspicuous example of the interest of the writer in his own craft is Thomas Mann: notice how many of the short stories in his collected "Stories of Three Decades" are concerned with the problem of the artist—not to speak of the interest betrayed in Mann's essays and public utterances in himself as genius.

★

Inevitably, this new volume of Henry James will be read more for what it reveals of Henry James than for what it reveals of Flaubert, Trollope, Balzac, Maupassant, Zola, Emerson, Turgeneff. Avowedly, he examines these writers from the point of view of a fellow practitioner. His choice of subjects—especially, the preponderance of contemporary French realistic novelists—follows his personal taste and to a large extent his personal acquaintance; reflects—as the editor perspicaciously points out—a deficiency in literary perspective ("his sense of history was a sense of the immediate past . . . still accessible to . . . personal contact"); finally, reflects the ambiguity which was at the same time James's limitation and his virtue.

★

Nothing was simple to Henry James, no surface opaque. For Balzac, his admiration would appear unqualified: "Stronger than ever," he begins his essay, "is the sense . . . that Balzac . . . is the first and foremost member of his craft." And yet James wonders "what might have become of him with less importunity in his consciousness of the machinery of life, of its furniture and fittings, of all that, right and left, he causes to assail us, sometimes almost to suffocation, under the general rubric of *things*."

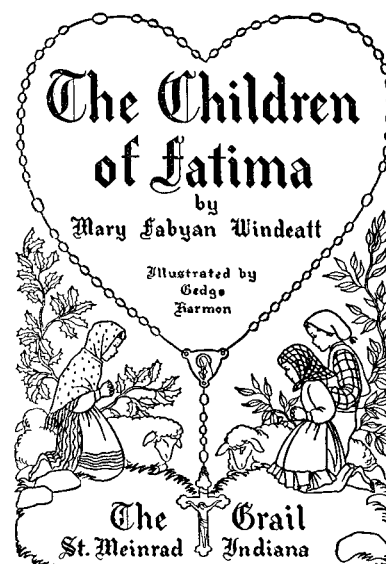
Or Flaubert. Henry James admires enormously Flaubert's command of form; finds, too, a positive merit in the difficulty Flaubert experienced in his vocation—writing *should* be difficult. Yet "Emma Bovary . . . is really too small an affair"; "Frédéric [Moreau] is positively too poor for his part." Flaubert, in the final analysis, is "more interesting . . . as a failure, however qualified, than as a success however explained."

Or again, de Maupassant. James praises without restraint the masculine firmness of his concise style, inseparable from his matter. But while as an artist Maupassant is "wonderfully rare," as a commentator he is "slightly common." James's justification of Maupassant's "low moral tone" rings not quite true.

In the case of Emerson (the only writer of non-fiction discussed), James, unlike his father, considered Emerson a most admirable example of morally-approvable matter. It was "his great distinction and his special sign that he had a more vivid conception of the moral life than anyone else." Emerson was, of course, deficient on the formal plane: "he is a striking exception to the general rule that writings live in their last resort by their form." The significant reservation, however, which James makes in

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regard to Emerson is not, in my view, Emerson's neglect of form so much as his blindness with regard to evil. In a passage such as this: "that ripe unconsciousness of evil which is one of the most beautiful signs by which we know him," he acknowledges envy, praise of this quality. But when, comparing Emerson to Hawthorne, he speaks of evil as "a side of life to which Emerson's eyes were thickly bandaged," we understand that he considers Emerson's moral optimism, however enviable, a limitation. Henry James could never have brought himself to approve without qualification the closed, or even clouded, eye.

Tolstoi, mentioned only incidentally, is another exception to the general rule that writings live in the last resort by form. Despite his genius, Tolstoi was, in James's view, "an execrable model."

These examples—I could cite many more—should make clear what I mean by Henry James's ambiguity, and likewise that it was not—it could not be, with James—a simple ambiguity, a mere paradox. Realistic matter ("The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life") must be fused with appropriate manner ("The story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and thread, and I have never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the thread without the needle, or the needle without the thread"). And yet Flaubert, who so conspicuously fused idea and form, was a failure. Why? Because of a defect in *moral content*; his protagonists, his subjects are simply

not sufficiently worthy. Maupassant's failure was not, after all, so much his low moral content as his neglect of man's chief distinction, his capacity for reflection (the same failure exemplified in our own day by Hemingway, Steinbeck and their schools which, suggestively, are more admired and imitated today in France than in America). Balzac was earth-bound (parallels in contemporary fiction are too numerous to mention). Zola was synthetic—filled in a predetermined, arbitrary plan rather than imaginatively interpreting direct observation: his oeuvre constitutes "perhaps the most extraordinary *imitation* of observation that we possess" (twentieth-century fiction in France offers numerous obvious parallels; for a local parallel, ignoring the epic scale of Zola, consider Sinclair Lewis who decides, for example, that the working of a modern luxury hotel would constitute a good subject for a novel, and then proceeds to "document" himself on the subject). For Turgénieff, alone, was James's enthusiasm unqualified. From James's two essays on Turgénieff, we discover little, however, regarding Turgénieff's writings; the essays are chiefly given over to personal reminiscence emphasizing Turgénieff's humanity. This admirable quality of humanity was the chief value of the British and American novelists who were James's contemporaries—the slice-of-life school (lump-of-life would be more accurate). The failure here is formlessness: matter (in shovelfuls) without manner.

What, then, did James want, demand from the novelist? Realism: but not, pray, the parody of realism known

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as naturalism; by realism he understood direct yet imaginative observation and interpretation of human character in significant action, equally remote from the sentimental, the picturesque and mere reportage. This must be presented in a form in which narrative and description (together, the *picture*) and *idea* are inseparable. While, however, the novelist must not, the critic must necessarily separate these; and it is a principal source of the ambiguity noticed in these essays of James's that he does not sufficiently acknowledge this necessity, even while he is always subject to it. A more important source, I think, is that he does not sufficiently acknowledge, nor appreciate, the extent to which he bases judgments upon "moral content." "We must grant the artist his subject, his idea, his *donnée*: our criticism is applied only to what he makes of it." No: "the idea, the subject of a novel . . . matters . . . to the highest degree."

What Henry James sought in other writers would appear to be, quite logically, what he sought to achieve in his own fiction: a "higher synthesis." It is not alone a question of fusing the various elements which constitute fiction: character, description, narrative, style, form, pace, social background, etc., etc.; all these elements, through the operation of the writer's *taste* ("There is simply no limit . . . to the misfortune of being tasteless") must reach a worthy plane. Art perhaps, is not subject to moral considerations. But conduct is, entirely.

In his concluding paragraph, the author of the introduction to this volume suggests that Henry James's "chief interest was conduct, not art." But wasn't Henry James's chief interest simultaneously conduct and art; and isn't this a resolution of his ambiguity? Just as when he analyzes other writers he must separate picture and idea, style and content, so he must separate conduct and art. Yet in his novels he need not, should not, does not.

Among Spring Books

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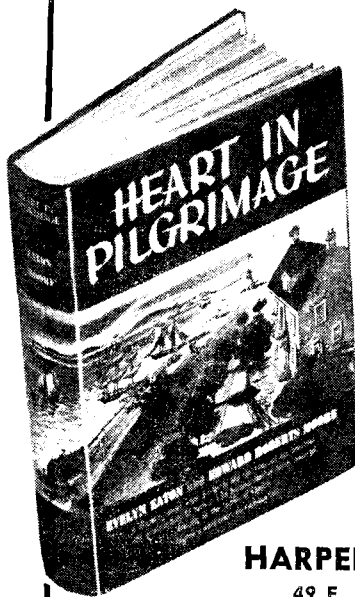
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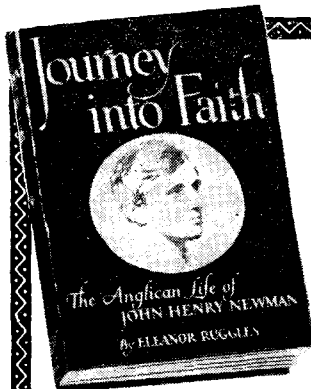
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The Art of Judging Music. Virgil Thomson (Knopf. \$4.25). A collection of Mr. Thomson's *N. Y. Herald Tribune* criticism which has the most amazing characteristic of being interesting to read whether you have heard, or want to hear the music.

More Books

The English Country Parson. William Addison. Macmillan. \$3.75.

OF SEVERAL English parsons this writer has met he remembers two in particular, who impressed themselves on his mind by the violent contrast they made. He ran across one of these in a Cornish summer resort; the man was there with his wife for the holidays. He was a middle-aged, robust, rubicund individual; you could easily imagine him in his leisured moments poring over

Fielding, Smotlett, Sterne and Voltaire's "*Candide*," which in fact he did. He was not so squeamish as to be afraid to confess to this relative stranger that he had a fondness for Scotch; to the observing eye the hour for imbibing coincided with his wife's agitated look as her eyes followed his figure up the stairs.

The other parson, whom this writer met in a Swiss mountain resort, was a different sort of man. No longer young, he was the very embodiment of kindness and charity; without being austere, he exhaled emanations of good spirit; you felt his moral integrity, and never could doubt it. You knew him to be a man of God. He reminded one of Trollope's Dr. Harding.

Both of these persons were vividly brought to mind in the reading of this book by William Addison, who, in rambling fashion, portraying England's country clergy through recent centuries, presents not only these extreme types but also all the intermediate types. The result is informative and entertaining.

The Bishop of London, in reviewing this book for the London *Sunday Times*, comments on the fact that the author is so busy telling stories about "characters" that he leaves little opportunity for striking an average. Yet it is precisely the stories that make this book so delightfully readable. At the outset, to be sure, Mr. Addison remarks that most of us in the course of our experience have met "at least one such honest soul" as a good parson; but it is argued that for the sake of the stories insufficient stress is laid on the average village parson as being the very hub and center of the social as well as the religious life of his community, which is so well pictured by G. G. Coulton, a historian much admired by Mr. Addison.

There have been historical changes, more marked in towns than in the villages whose life, despite inevitable deflections, goes on relatively unchanging in tune with the eternal English village landscape. This still provides its charm for some, boredom for others. It is recorded here that Charles Kingsley once imagined himself being called up to answer the question how he contrived to endure the monotonous life of a country parson. "You complain," he said, "that such a life, with such petty interests, is monotonous. I delight in that same monotony. It is pleasant and good to see the same trees year after year; the same birds coming back in spring to the same shrubs; the same banks covered with the same flowers . . . if you rob me of my faith in 'minute philosophy,' you rob me of a continual source of content, surprise, delight."

This, however, need not be thought to be the desire of all parsons; the younger clergy definitely prefer town parishes, where their minds may more clearly discern the movement of historical change. None the less, it would be untrue to say, taking this narrative as a criterion, that the existence of the English country parson has been either monotonous or devoid of drama and color. On the contrary. And this is largely due to the fact that the English village parson is an Englishman, that is to say, a strongly individualized being who makes his presence felt, each in his own fashion, wherever he may be. A more colorful pageant of parsons than is portrayed in this book you could scarcely have.

And you don't have to go to novels to meet the oddest Jakes imaginable among parsons in remote English villages. There was Hawker (1804-1875) who lived and ministered at Morwenstow on the rocky, gusty coast of north Cornwall. "He was no shepherd and his people

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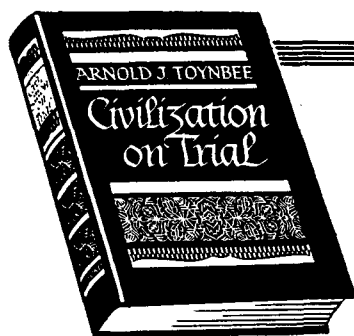
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were not sheep," is the piquant way in which Mr. Addison puts it, and he presents enough facts to sustain the statement. The people were as wild as the man who ruled them. Many of them were smugglers, and the poor of this barren country considered a shipwreck in winter "more like the mercy than the wrath of God, for often it was only thus they were able to fill their larders. In this connection, it is told of the parson of the neighboring parish of Poughill, that once when news of a wreck was brought to him during service, he walked down the nave as far as the font in surplice, and there flung off the ecclesiastical garment, shouting: 'My Christian brethren, there's a ship wrecked in the cove, let us all start fair.'" Then he and his congregation raced across the graveyard, and elbowed each other down the cliff paths to salvage the spoils.

As for Hawker, he had no love for Wesleyans who were everywhere in Cornwall, though he would invite them to his table and entertain them in the friendliest manner. One day he had to lunch a Roman Catholic, an Independent minister, a High-Anglican, and one described as a "Nothingarian." When rallied about this odd assembly he retorted: "Well, I thought it best; they never will meet in the next world." Mr. Addison now and again speaks of this tolerance of English parsons, which he regards as a great virtue, though he is frank enough to admit that when tolerance comes in through the door fervor too often flies out of the window.

★

An entire chapter is devoted to Sporting Parsons. It is asserted that in lonely parts of the country a few old persons may still be found who remember the last of these drinking, fighting parsons of a coarser age. "I do not see in my Bible that the apostles went out shooting," a parishioner once protested. "No," replied the ready-witted parson, "sport was bad in Palestine; they went fishing instead." Which reminds Mr. Addison of a north-country parson of our own day, who got the village children to collect minnows for him each Saturday in the fishing season for his use the following Monday. This bait was kept in the font over the weekend, and one Saturday when a young mother asked the sexton if her baby could be baptised the following day she received the indignant reply: "Can't have babies baptised yet—font's full of parson's minnows."

On the whole, however, the narrative is peppered with incidents in the lives of parsons who in every way were great and noble. There is a chapter on the parson poets and poetical parsons, men who made poetry out of their lives. It begins with the words, "Christianity is the poet's religion." Among the more distinguished was George Herbert, of whom Isaac Walton said that his "most holy life was such that it begot such reverence to God and to him, that they thought themselves the happier, when they carried Mr. Herbert's blessing with them to their labor." The poor were devoted to him. There was also Robert Herrick the rather gay poet who "when he took over his parish of four thousand acres on the slopes of Dartmoor, and his ninety-three acres of glebe, bade farewell to poetry." The author makes this comment: "Herrick, thank God, did not hold the extraordinary belief that we prepare ourselves for happiness in the next world by making ourselves and our friends miserable in this."

JOHN CURNOS.

Supplement II: The American Language. H. L. Mencken. Knopf. \$7.50.

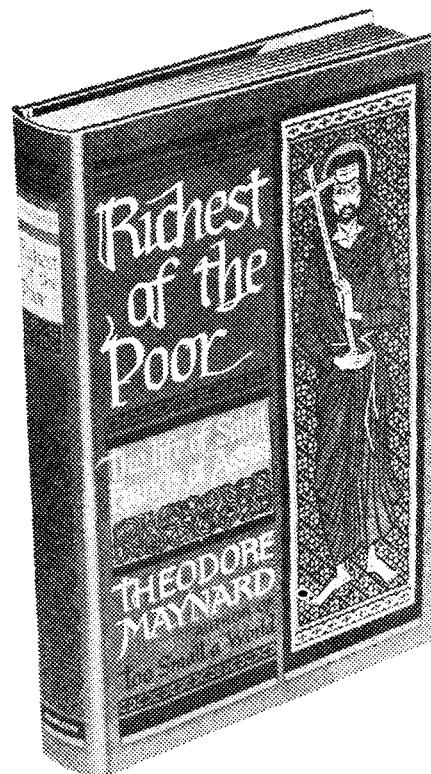
A Hog on Ice and Other Curious Expressions. Charles Earle Funk. Harper. \$3.00.

IN 1816, John Pickering, a Massachusetts lawyer who was also deeply interested in several phases of linguistic study, published his *Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases Which Have Been Supposed to Be Peculiar to the United States of America*, in the Preface to which he wrote: "In this country, as is the case in England, we have thirsty reformers and presumptuous sciolists, who would unsettle the whole of our admirable language for the purpose of making it conform to their whimsical notions of propriety." During the period of more than a century which has intervened since this statement we have had much attention devoted to the study of language, ranging from Thomas Jefferson's Old English grammar through investigations of the ancient Greek dialects and of such esoteric languages as Hittite and Tokharian to the latest guaranteed-to-teach-you-English-in-twelve-easy-lessons course. And one of the points that has occasioned the most heated argument (the intensity of discussion often being directly paralleled by the writer's ignorance) has been the relationship between the language of England and that of America.

No one would ever think of labeling H. L. Mencken either a "thirsty reformer" or a "presumptuous sciolist" but, at the same time, our American language has had no doughtier champion, no more painstaking gatherer of footnotes, no more readable interpreter. As at least some school boys know, "The American Language" first appeared in 1919 and went through four editions which were variously corrected, enlarged and rewritten as the author accumulated more evidence and, like many another writer, increased his mastery over it. Thus it was that after the fourth edition (1936), faced with the prospect of undertaking another thorough-going revision, he decided not to attempt such a task again but to issue a supplementary volume. It soon became apparent, however, that two such volumes would be necessary and thus it was that "Supplement I," enlarging upon the subject matter of the first six chapters of the "American Language," appeared in 1945. Now comes "Supplement II," paralleling the next five chapters and totaling nearly eight hundred pages, yet omitting the fat twelfth chapter which the author had promised in the first supplement. Something of the wealth of material made available here is suggested by the opening chapter on American pronunciation. Filling two hundred and seventy pages, it first gives an elaborate outline of its general character, then lengthy discussions of the vowels and consonants, and finally detailed comments on the linguistic peculiarities of each of the forty-eight states, Alaska, Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Canada, and "Other Dialects" (German, Yiddish, Negro, et cetera). Even though most discussions of the sounds of language tend to be dull, Mencken manages to make his account highly readable, partly through having done an admirable job of analysis and condensation, partly through his own unbounded enthusiasm for the subject. The most annoying quality in his writing as here displayed is the wearying repetition of various pet tags; even the most iconoclastic of progressive teachers would be bored by the derisive use of such words as *schoolma'am* and *pedagogue* on nearly every page.

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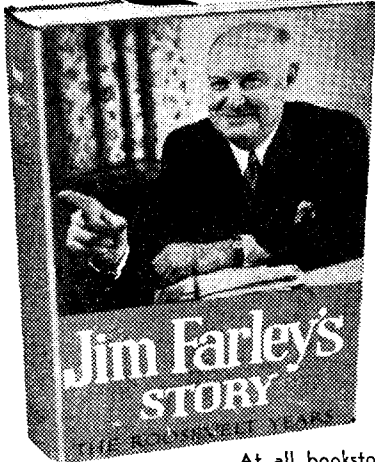
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In equally thorough fashion the other chapters cover spelling, the parts of speech, proper names, and slang. These last two are particularly readable, though the latter is much more concerned with cant and argot than with slang proper. After nearly eighty pages of listing and commenting in detail on a great variety of such terms, the author, realizing that any attempt to continue the discussion in such fashion would give a disproportionate emphasis to the chapter, simply catalogues in highly selective fashion the argot of trades, professions, sports, and hobbies ranging from advertising agents, aquarists, apple-pickers, and architects to tanners, textile-workers, tobacco-growers, and union men in general. "What's in a name?" is a common enough query, and there is enough evidence in the discussion of proper names to substantiate the view that a rose by any other name is just as sweet, whether we are thinking of the relatively simple (Adenesia, Floradawn, Zelvateen), the elaborately euphonious (Mary Beatrice Love Divine Ceeno Tatrice Belle Caroline), or the wholly ridiculous (Loyal Lodge No. 296, Knights of Pythias Ponca City Oklahoma Smith).

Charles Earle Funk began his career as an engineer and has ended it as editor-in-chief of the New College Standard Dictionary. It is not surprising, then, to find him doing a brief dictionary of popular sayings, obviously an ideal sort of project for a retired lexicographer who is interested in something more than the mere listing of words. More than four hundred sayings and phrases of widely varying character are brought together in rather helter-skelter fashion—a bit surprising when one considers the author's lexical background; one would expect some categorizing or at least alphabetizing, but a good index eases the use of the book. Some of the expressions commented on are almost too common to have been included (feather one's nest, carry coals to Newcastle), and others hardly justify the publisher's blurb ("we use in our daily speech"): bull of Bashan, not amount to Hannah More, Garrison finish. But most of the sayings one would hope to find in a small book of this character are here and, although naturally many are phrases which have been in use so long that they are now trite, the comments are informative and it is good to find something as recent and widely current as *iron curtain* included. Incidentally, although this is primarily an adult's book, its general readability and the amusing black-and-white drawings by Tom Funk scattered through it tend to make it one which might have considerable appeal to less mature readers as well.

THOMAS A. KIRBY.

By This Strange Fire. Edith Pargeter. Reynal. \$3.00.
Dark is the Mirror. William Kinsey. Houghton. \$3.00.

NEARLY ten years ago Edith Pargeter established her reputation as one of England's talented young writers with the publication of "The City Lies Four-Square." Her recently published novel is another book written with skill and having great beauty. As in William Kinsey's "Dark is the Mirror," charm and distinction in "By This Strange Fire" come partly from setting—in the one case Stockholm and in the other an isolated English village—and partly from characterization clearly conceived and deftly developed.

In both of these novels the central characters are good (good rather than bad, weak, or amoral), their qualities are appropriate to their actions, and they are "true to life" in the best sense of the expression. These two

serious novels, each probably too restrained to be a best-seller, are somewhat similar in other ways. In neither of them is the action adequately motivated; there seems to be no necessity, arising either from character or from earlier situations, in the action that develops. The reader wonders why the beautiful English woman novelist in the one story and the talented American scientist in the other act as they do. Restlessness is the explanation, but restlessness itself in intelligent, successful persons of achievement needs more explanation than it gets.

In the two novels the past overshadows and peoples the present in a manner that is not ordinary in life or conventional in fiction. In Miss Pargeter's book the past flows into the present in such a way that a man, a martyr three centuries dead, is the beloved of the central character—indeed he is the central character of the story within the story. In Mr. Kinsey's novel the remote past is also a strong factor, not so much in terms of the influence of past events on the present as in the persisting influence of persons long dead.

Both of these novels give a picture of long-past cruelty and violence which remind the reader anew that cruelty of man to man is not peculiar to our times. Written for literate rather than popular taste, these novels cause a reader to think and ponder and hence give the sort of pleasure that comes from thought and reflection.

RUTH BYRNS.

The Edge of the Night. John Prebble. Sloane. \$3.50.

THIS is the story of an intelligent English soldier who went through the European campaign after a belated arrival on the continent, and who became progressively more embittered against the Germans (his wife had been killed by a buzz bomb), but who finally came smack up against the realization that one could not continue to hate, no matter how much one tried. It is also the story of the people around him, officers and men, friends and enemies, and, understandably, the woman he meets in occupied Germany who somehow begins to mean something to him, even though she is the apparently unreconstructed widow of a Nazi officer. Her suicide at the end of the book only heightens his sense of futility and his sense of justice, which was about to manifest itself in a proposal of marriage to this symbol of all he had hated.

By no means a top-flight novel (the writing and characterization are too ragged), this is a highly readable work. Some of the portraits of the men and officers are distinguished (poor Mr. Smith, for example, the useless misfit, despised by his men). Jones, the central character, is sensitively drawn, though too lengthily purgatorized. And the general picture of horror and desolation is accurate—only too remindful of the late war. Mr. Prebble will undoubtedly come through with a more finished piece of prose that will be part of the beginning of good World War II fiction.

T. E. CASSIDY.

The Strong Room. Jere H. Wheelwright. Scribners. \$3.00.

LOVERS of romance will revel in Jere H. Wheelwright's "The Strong Room," a novel of England, and especially London, in the middle of the sixteenth century, during the early months of the reign of Mary Tudor. One of the Queen's first acts upon her accession to the throne is to release John Aumarle, Earl of Bristol, who has been a prisoner in the Tower of London for

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eight years, solely because by birth he was a little too near the throne for Henry VIII's peace of mind. From the cramped "Strong Room," the upper story of the Bell Tower, with its stone walls nine feet thick, which he had entered as a boy, Aumarle, not yet twenty-three, goes a free man into the strange world of feudal England. He encounters great lords with their yeomen and retainers, politicians in and out of favor, spies, "villains, drawlatches, and murderers," who jostle one another in the muddy and malodorous streets of London, while intrigue, treachery, and treason lay plot and counterplot. The Tower continues to cast its grim shadows upon him, as false friends and secret enemies raise their voices above the claque of the Queen's Council to ruin him.

The Earl's struggles to prove his loyalty to the Queen, to save his brother from the gallows, to marry the girl he loves, and to cheat the Strong Room a second time motivate much spur-spur-and-spare-not riding into the counties, good swordplay, and hairbreadth escapes, as the cloak and dagger drama of the story dashes from crisis to crisis. Instead of using the old device of drawing out the tale and teasing the reader with suspense, Mr. Wheelwright explodes his climaxes suddenly and unexpectedly. His style has a sixteenth century patina that helps the imagination to recreate Tudor England and gives the impression that the author is a good reporter telling what happened yesterday.

Two features that are rather unusual in contemporary fiction distinguish this novel. It has a good, although slightly melodramatic, plot, cleverly woven into the historical events of the period. And it has as its principal character a hero with really admirable qualities, who wins the sympathy and holds the rapt interest of the reader.

BONAVENTURE SCHWINN.

Harp in the South. Ruth Park. Houghton. \$3.00.

SHANTY TOWN seems the nightmare side of Sydney, whose gracious harbor and opulent thoroughfares have little in common with the filth strewn streets and rotting houses of Surry Hill. It seems to take a couple of generations for the Irish peasant to achieve decent living conditions once he is uprooted from the stone cottage and purifying rain of his native fields, and the Darcys showed small soap-and-water resistance to the Australian slums. This is the Prize Novel of a young New Zealander who married an Irish journalist in Sydney, and was forced by the housing shortage to settle in Surry Hill. The Brooklyn tree has been transplanted to rather good advantage in a more integrated story with a strong O'Casey flavor, but just lacking the sense of reticence which marks a master.

The Darcys live in a two-story wooden house with streaked paint and peeling plaster. The parents, Mumma and Hugh, who gets fighting drunk every Saturday, sleep off the kitchen in a windowless bedroom, and upstairs the girls, Rowena and Dolour are next the lodgers—Mr. Diamond, the old Orangeman who fights Hugh every St. Patrick's Day, and Miss Sheily, with her moron son whom she beats so cruelly. One St. Patrick's Day, Mr. Diamond tells Hugh that now they can call it off because he has joined the Church. "You dirty old turncoat!" shouts Mr. Darcy, and kicks the old man up the stairs. But even Hugh finds more than his equal in Grandma, with her clay pipe. Grandma is the prize character.

Rowena is the heroine. She comes close to irretriev-

able tragedy with the Jewish boy, who, strangely, Mumma seemed to consider an eligible. Then the author gives her all to depicting Roie's romance with Charlie, whose Irish is mixed with black. It is hard to imagine, however, their returning from their honeymoon in a clean little cabin on the beach to life in Miss Sheily's dirty room—Miss Sheily having conveniently married a barrel-organ Swede who admired spirit in a woman, even when it took the form of inspiring his love to seal his new hat with a hot toasting fork. Rowena and Charlie are left happy with their baby, but we are left wondering how they protect the poor little thing from the bugs which are described so graphically as hanging in wreaths in the joints of the beds. We can only pray that Mrs. Park inspires some slum clearance in Sydney.

E. V. R. WYATT.

Ideas Have Consequences. Richard M. Weaver. Chicago. \$2.75.

I COULD be tempted to call this book a sermon if I could avoid the suggestion that the author does any "preaching." It is what more sermons ought to be: a reexamination of everyday life and its assumptions in the light of spiritual first principles. Mr. Weaver is concerned to "establish the fact of decadence" as an antidote to "hysterical optimism" (perhaps hysterical pessimism is the current phase of the same fever-chart). He adduces such major symptoms as these: the disintegrative tendencies of an age of potential abundance; the combination of sentimentality and brutality in collective action; the exaltation of an undefined, and therefore dangerous, egalitarianism above the ideal of fraternity; the resulting tendency toward statism and tyranny based on the undifferentiated mass; the decline of moral discrimination; the abandonment—especially in education—of the quest for truth in favor of the accumulation of "facts"; the development in America of what he aptly calls "the spoiled child psychology" with its manifestations in art, music and literature as well as politics.

Underlying these aberrations Mr. Weaver discerns two historical factors, not unrelated: the medieval emphasis on the Aristotelian rather than the Platonic tradition (he is therefore critical of the Thomists); and the influence of William of Occam and the nominalists. Many readers will enjoy a mental argument with the author on both points: it is not solely a matter of emphasis. But however that may turn out, Mr. Weaver's attempt to get at the philosophic roots of the modern malaise fully justifies the title of his book; and he recognizes, at least by implication, that there are other modes of knowledge besides "ideas" that "have consequences."

When it comes to prescription, however, the recognition is a bit bashful. The author, in a rather happy expression, demands "a metaphysical course toward center, which will be neither a going-backward nor a going-forward in the current sense of these phrases." Our first task, he says, is to drive in the wedge between the material and the transcendental, and reestablish the fundamental dualism (without benefit of the Sacraments, apparently). "That the thing is not true and the act is not just unless these conform to a conceptual ideal—if we can make this plain again, utilitarianism and pragmatism will have been defeated." One agrees; but the term "conceptual" will have to be stretched pretty wide to make it cover what the author obviously intends it to cover. What

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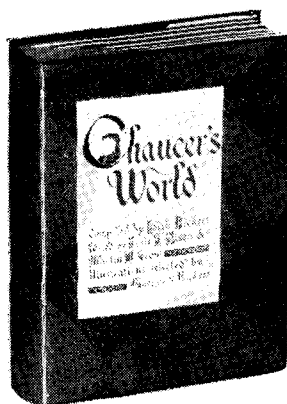


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Greece — June Haying — Resisting Without War

GREEK GUERRILLAS, by Dr. Sarah Wambaugh, world authority on plebiscites, is a firsthand account of several Greek soldiers who had taken to the mountains under Communist inspiration to revolt against their government. This highly authentic narrative should serve to counteract the impression which has been created that Greece is now a "police state."

THE PHEASANT HEN, by Albert Eisele, is a poignant sketch about a Midwest farmer who was fearful of killing wildlife as he went about his first spring mowing.

NEITHER APPEASEMENT NOR WAR, by Murray Ballantyne, editor of the "Canadian Register," is a detailed analysis of "How to Stop the Russians without War," by Fritz Sternberg.

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he wants is a society that can rightly respect itself, and therefore evoke the spiritual loyalty and respect of its members. To this end he advances three oddly-related desiderata. One is the defence of private property as "the last metaphysical right." Mr. Weaver is very hard on the Whigs; but it is John Locke's conception of private property, not that of finance capitalism, that he is defending. Second is "the power of the word." Here we have a vindication of the logos doctrine (quoting St. John) against the instrumentalism of the semanticists. Third comes a deeply felt plea for *pietas*: reverence for the not-self, the personality of others, the spiritual law in history, the authority of the timeless: for the catholicity of Catholicism, one might say—but the author stops just short of saying it; stops dead in his tracks, so to speak, as if he had suddenly seen something.

One welcomes this book, not only because of the merit of its appraisals, but because of the company it keeps. It is one of that growing number of books that are quietly circulating among thoughtful people who are aware of the fragility of our civilization and the threat to all its values. That is a goodly company, engaged upon a godly work.
W. A. ORTON.

Protohistory: an Explicative Account of the Development of Human Thought from Palaeolithic Times to the Persian Monarchy. H. C. E. Zacharias. Herder. \$4.00.

DR. HANS ZACHARIAS, professor of history at the Catholic University of Peiping, has dedicated this handsomely illustrated little book to Father Wilhelm Schmidt, the most distinguished living Catholic anthropologist. Brilliantly written and boldly speculative, it is the only comprehensive survey of early old world civilization that has appeared in English by a follower of the culture-historical school, and, as such, it completes works on primitive religion and sociology by Father Schmidt and Father Sieber and Dr. Mueller, that were previously published by Herder.

In the introductory chapter on methodology, the author bases his fundamental postulates on the Thomistic teachings concerning men and nature. The growth of civilization becomes a vital creative process which, taking place under the supremacy of psychological factors, must be interpreted from an historical diffusionist standpoint rather than through any theory of evolution. Hence a strong but just criticism of parallelism with its concept of progressive, continuous, unilinear development is accompanied by a brief outline of the historical method and by a defense of the theory of culture-circles (*Kulturkreise*). The latter are living social organisms, each of which is characterized by its own particular type of religious belief, social organization, technology, economic activity, government and even traits of personality. However, due to secondary movements, these cultures apparently survive nowhere today in their original forms, but must be reconstructed from available ethnological data. So far the school claims to have established no less than four early civilizations; the primitive and the three primary circles of the hunters, agriculturists and herdsmen. Finally the culture-circles are also considered to be methodological tools for research by which later secondary stages of human history may be investigated and even to some degree reconstructed.

"Protohistory" is not an easy book to evaluate. Without doubt it possesses the undeniable merits that are usually found in the writings of the historical school, such as

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careful scholarship, wide erudition and a certain intangible maturity of cultural background. Moreover, a fine sense of discrimination in selecting only the best authorities, with a tendency to stress the works of such Catholic scholars as Obermaier, Koppers, Junker, Drioton, Menghin, La Vallee Poussin, etc., recommends it.

On the other hand, although there is general agreement upon most of the methodological principles, American ethnologists have invariably refused to accept the theories and conclusions of the school. To add to this difficulty, it must be, but seldom is, admitted that, with the exception of a few essays by Lowie and Kluckhohn, it is impossible to find criticisms that are adequate or even fair.

The real value of "Protohistory" results from the author's undeniable powers of synthesis and his prolific ability in developing ideas and theories. The primary culture-circles are tied in with archeological and linguistic data, traced to their hypothetical points of origin in the Pamirs, Indo-China and Central Siberia, and, following Menghin, correlated with the blade, pick and bone cultures of the palaeolithic. Similarly, the method of synthesis is carried over to the secondary and tertiary stages, the period of the contact of civilizations which leads up to the invention of writing and the dawn of recorded history. Succeeding sections which outline the histories of Egypt, Babylonia and the Aegean area, although competently handled, offer little that is new, whereas his descriptions of the peripheral areas, of North-

ern China, India and the steppes and of unfamiliar people like the Subareans, Caspians, Altaians, Mitanni, etc., make fascinating reading. THEODORE M. AVERY, JR.

Catholic Authors 1930-1947. Matthew Hoehn, editor. St. Mary's Abbey, Newark, N. J. \$10.00.

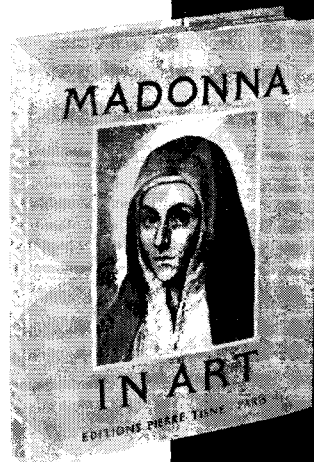
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